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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on educational policy issues in Massachusetts of concern to Latinos in areas of retention and achievement, with a goal of recommending policy research. Nationally, Hispanic American students are not served by current educational initiatives. Rather, this group bears the brunt of the dropout rates and low school achievement levels. Statewide statistics indicate that Latino students are likely to be placed in low-status courses and tracked outside of access to exam schools or college preparatory courses, raising doubts that Latino students have equal access to education. In addition, students who have been retained in one grade and students from non-English speaking homes tend to drop out of school. The following four tasks are suggested in response to the above findings: (1) create a voice for the interest of Latino students that requires policy makers to acknowledge the extent of Latino underachievement and disengagement; (2) assess the extent to which Latino students have access to programs designed to improve student achievement and retention; (3) define excellence in education for Latino children; and (4) continue to search for solutions already in effect through review of the literature. Data are displayed in 13 tables. This paper contains 43 references. (JB)

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